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For Release: IMMEDIATELY

CITIZENS TRAINED TO BE FISHERIES LEADERS

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MANITOWOC, Wis. (Oct. 7, 2003) - Sport and commercial fishers, fisheries managers and scientists from around Lake Michigan converged in Manitowoc, Wis., Saturday to provide interested citizens the knowledge they need to become effective leaders on fishery issues.

The knowledge required can seem as deep as the lake itself.

In the day-long workshop, 27 people examined the status of Lake Michigan's fisheries today, how they have changed in recent decades, the complex effects wrought by exotic species, and the equally complex web of interlocking agencies and institutions that work together to manage the lake's fisheries.

A group discussion in the afternoon focused on ways to increase citizens' access to decision-making processes. Increasing contact with legislators was identified as an important means of achieving such access.

Attendees at the workshop came from all four states surrounding Lake Michigan. They included representatives of Trout Unlimited, the Milwaukee chapter of the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Club, Walleyes for Tomorrow, charter captains and commercial fishers.

The workshop was part of the Great Lakes Sea Grant Fisheries Leadership Institute, a program sponsored by the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network. Similar workshops are being held this fall and winter for each of the Great Lakes and for each state in the Great Lakes basin.

"The institute is designed to give participants the knowledge they need to be effective stewards of the fishery," said Phil Moy, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant fisheries specialist. "We want to empower the public to effectively interact with Great Lakes fisheries management organizations. To do that, they need to be well-informed about the science and biology of the issues, and they need understand the relationships among the managing institutions. They need to know who to talk to."

A state-based Michigan workshop will be held Oct. 21-22 in Lansing. For more information, call Brandon Schroeder at (517) 432-5037.

The Lake Superior workshop will be held Jan. 11-12, 2004, in Ashland, Wis., and the state-based Wisconsin workshop will be scheduled for late January. For more information on these, call Phil Moy at (920) 683-4697.

For information about more workshops and about the Great Lakes Sea Grant Leadership Institute, see <http://www.greatlakesseagrant.org/leadership.html>.

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Created in 1966, Sea Grant is a national network of 30 university-based programs of research, outreach and education dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the United States' coastal, ocean and Great Lakes resources. The National Sea Grant Network is a partnership of participating coastal states, private industry and the National Sea Grant College Program, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.